

Escanaba, Michigan: the steam tug "Swain," having in tow the schooner "Swallow," left port on the morning of the 6th for Detroit. This was the last vessel to leave port this season and navigation was practically closed on that date.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin: there was more ice in Milwaukee Bay at the end of the month than there has been in any December during the past ten years; on the 31st three propellers were fast in the ice for several hours.

Erie, Pennsylvania: the propeller "Philadelphia," of the Anchor Line, reached this port, by forcing her way through the ice, on the morning of the 7th; this was the last vessel to arrive at this port, and navigation was closed for the season.

Sandusky, Ohio: Sandusky Bay became frozen over on the 1st and navigation was closed for the season. All steamers at this port have gone into winter quarters.

Little Rock, Arkansas: the steamer "Ella" arrived on the 18th, but, owing to the low stage of the water in the Arkansas River, was unable to depart. On the 27th the river was navigable for small boats only.

Louisville, Kentucky: on the 22d and 23d the Ohio River was filled with heavy floating ice which impeded the progress of steamboats.

Leavenworth, Kansas: the Missouri River at this point was frozen over from the 4th to 10th and from the 27th to 31st; on all other days of the month it was filled with heavy floating ice.

Rochester, New York: the Genesee River became frozen on the 2d, closing navigation for the season.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: ice formed rapidly on the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers during the 5th, making navigation difficult. Navigation on the Schuylkill River closed this season unusually early and a large number of canal boats were ice bound.

In the following table are shown the danger-points at the various river stations; the highest and lowest depths for December, 1886, with the dates of occurrence, and the monthly ranges:

Heights of rivers above low-water mark, December, 1886.

[Expressed in feet and tenths.]

Stations.	Danger point on gauge.	Highest water.		Lowest water.		Monthly range.
		Date.	Height.	Date.	Height.	
<i>Red River:</i>						
Shreveport, Louisiana.....	29.9	1 to 5	10.5	28 to 31	4.0	6.5
<i>Arkansas River:</i>						
Fort Smith, Arkansas.....	22.0	24 to 27	1.6	7, 8	0.8	0.8
Little Rock, Arkansas.....	23.0	1	3.3	21, 22, 23	1.3	2.0
<i>Missouri River:</i>						
Yankton, Dakota.....	24.0	4	.....	.....	.....	.....
Omaha, Nebraska.....	18.0	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Leavenworth, Kansas.....	20.0	12	6.0	18	3.1	2.9
<i>Mississippi River:</i>						
Saint Paul, Minnesota*	14.5	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
La Crosse, Wisconsin*	24.0	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Dubuque, Iowa.....	16.0	5	3.2	1	1.7	1.5
Davenport, Iowa*	15.0	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Keokuk, Iowa*	14.0	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Saint Louis, Missouri.....	32.0	19	7.9	14.5	10.1	7.8
Cairo, Illinois.....	40.0	1	23.8	17, 18	9.2	14.6
Memphis, Tennessee.....	34.0	3	18.4	20	6.6	11.8
Vicksburg, Mississippi.....	41.0	8, 9	20.5	25	6.3	14.2
New Orleans, Louisiana.....	13.0	9	5.1	26, 28	2.0	3.1
<i>Ohio River:</i>						
Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.....	22.0	26	12.3	11, 12	2.8	9.5
Cincinnati, Ohio.....	50.0	29	27.2	14, 15	10.0	17.3
Louisville, Kentucky.....	25.0	1	11.4	15	5.6	5.8
<i>Cumberland River:</i>						
Nashville, Tennessee.....	40.0	23	20.8	12, 13	4.7	16.1
<i>Tennessee River:</i>						
Knoxville, Tennessee.....	14	8.0	8	2.3	5.7	.....
Chattanooga, Tennessee.....	33.0	22	16.6	12	4.0	12.6
<i>Monongahela River:</i>						
Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.....	29.0	26	12.3	11, 12	2.8	9.5
<i>Savannah River:</i>						
Augusta, Georgia.....	32.0	13	11.5	4, 5	6.5	5.0
<i>Mobile River:</i>						
Mobile, Alabama.....	4	16.8	16	15, 1	1.7	.....
<i>Sacramento River:</i>						
Sacramento, California.....	10, 11	10.9	1 to 7	7.8	3.1	.....
<i>Willamette River:</i>						
Portland, Oregon.....	28, 29, 30	10.0	6	0.1	9.9	.....
<i>Colorado River:</i>						
Yuma, Arizona.....	18 to 22, 25, [26, 27]	15.6	3, 4, 5	14.9	0.7	.....

* River frozen.

† Approximated.

ATMOSPHERIC ELECTRICITY.

AUROREAS.

Mount Washington, New Hampshire: a faint auroral light was observed from 9.50 to 11.30 p. m. of the 17th; it was accompanied by no streamers or other distinctive features.

Fort Buford, Dakota: an auroral light of a pale white color appeared on the northern horizon at 9.28 p. m. of the 22d; it extended from northwest to northeast and to an altitude of about 15°. Between 10.15 and 10.25 p. m. a few white streamers, extending to an altitude of 27°, were visible in the north. The aurora was obscured by clouds at 11.45 p. m.

Saint Vincent, Minnesota: an aurora was observed in the north at 11 p. m. of the 25th; it first appeared in the form of a low line of light extending from north to northeast, and having an altitude of about three degrees. At 11.15 p. m. the light had become wider and white beams shot upward from different parts of the base. At the base the colors increased in intensity, showing successively white, lemon, orange, and red, the last-named color was the last to disappear, remaining visible until the early morning of the 26th.

Bismarck, Dakota: an auroral arch extending from azimuth 150° to 225° and to an altitude of 30° was seen at 12.45 a. m. of the 26th. The maximum intensity occurred at 1.15 a. m. when beams of bright light extended to an altitude of 40°. The display ended at 7.45 a. m.

Marquette, Michigan: an aurora was visible from 9.15 to 10.20 p. m. of the 29th; several streamers extended to a height of 40°.

Other auroral displays were observed during the month, as follows:

- 1st.—Escanaba, Michigan; Green Bay, Wisconsin; Gardiner, Maine.
- 2d.—Escanaba, Michigan; Embarras, Wisconsin.
- 4th.—Nashua, New Hampshire.
- 7th.—Moorhead, Minnesota.
- 12th.—Wellsborough, Pennsylvania.
- 15th.—Sandwich, Illinois.
- 17th.—Gardiner, Maine.
- 20th.—Eastport, Maine.
- 22d.—Bismarck and Fort Totten, Dakota; North Volney, New York.
- 23d.—Bismarck, Dakota.
- 25th.—Fort Totten, Dakota; Helena, Montana.
- 26th.—Poplar River, Montana.
- 28th.—Mackinaw City and Escanaba, Michigan; Nashua, New Hampshire; Embarras, Wisconsin.
- 29th.—Mackinaw City and Escanaba, Michigan.
- 31st.—Delavan, Wisconsin.

ELECTROMETER READINGS.

[Prepared under the direction of Prof. T. C. MENDENHALL, Assistant.] Observations have been made regularly at 9 a. m., 11 a. m., 1 p. m., and 3 p. m., daily, at the six stations now supplied with electrometers. At Washington City, owing to severity of the weather, observations at the top of the Washington Monument were only made with difficulty. On December 15th, during cold, rainy weather, values were obtained as follows:

Time.	Monument.	Signal Office.	Time.	Monument.	Signal Office.
9 a. m.	Volts.	Volts.	12.05 p. m.	Volts.	Volts.
11 a. m.	+ 90	- 270	12.10 p. m.	225	- 36
1 p. m.	{ - 390	500	12.15 p. m.	225	+ 6
3 p. m.	500	1375	12.20 p. m.	500	+ 132
11.15 a. m.	500	1375	12.25 p. m.	450	+ 48
11.30 a. m.	1375	1375	12.30 p. m.	125	+ 36
11.45 a. m.	400	228	12.35 p. m.	125	+ 30
12 m.	—	—	—	—	—

Monument elevation, 500 feet.

Signal Office elevation, 35 feet.

Sparks could be obtained at the Monument by connecting

5th, with positive values; on the 7th, with positive and negative values.

At Baltimore, Maryland, a continuous photographic record has been obtained. Fluctuations during rain are marked on several sheets. The record for forty-eight hours from noon of December 4th to noon of December 6th includes the first snow storm of the season. Beginning at 2.05 p. m. of the 4th the potential continues positive, averaging 100 volts, with a sudden fall almost to zero about 7 p. m.; becoming positive again, slightly higher than before, until about 10 p. m. when the value is doubled, continuing until shortly before midnight when great fluctuations begin, extending to 500 volts on each side of zero, and continuing until 2.30 a. m. High positive values prevail until 7 a. m., decreasing steadily from that time, and become slightly negative about 12 m. of the 5th. Very high positive values prevailed from 12.30 p. m. to 1.45 p. m., followed by variable indications turning to negative, reaching a maximum, 300 volts, shortly after 5 p. m., or about the time the snow ended. It is to be noted that here, as at the other stations, positive electricity predominates during snow. Fluctuations of 1,000 volts on each side occur, during rain, from 10.40 a. m. to 10.50 p. m. of December 15th.

At Columbus, Ohio, negative values occurred on the following dates: on the 9th, in value 3 volts, during smoke almost as thick as fog. This is quite an exceptional instance, as no negative values are recorded for some time preceding and following, and as there appears to be no change in the weather with which this might be connected. On December 13th, negative values occurred during light rain; on the 22d, during light snow; on the 23d, during light rain, and on the 24th, during rain and snow. Snow occurred on November 30th, accompanied with positive values; on December 1st, with positive values; on the 17th, with high positive values; on the 22d, with negative values, and on the 24th, with negative values. The highest positive values were 136 volts on November 30th, during fair weather; 70 volts on December 2d, during clear weather; 92 volts on December 17th, during light snow, and 155 volts on December 29th, during fair weather. Zero potentials occurred on the 14th and 15th, during rain. The highest negative values occurred on the 24th, during snow.

At New Haven, Connecticut, negative values were obtained on the following dates: December 7th, at 9 a. m., value 8.8 volts, during cloudy weather, with high northeasterly winds, and preceding snow two hours. December 13th, at 1 p. m., value 57 volts, during light rain, which continued for some time. December 15th, at 1 p. m. and 3 p. m., during light rain, and preceding snow. December 18th, at 9 a. m. and 11 a. m., during light rain which continued for some time after last observation.

Rain occurred on the 13th, 15th, 18th, and 24th, the last being the only date not accompanied by negative values. The value during the rain, which ended soon after, was 23 volts positive. Snow occurred on December 7th, with values changing from minus 7 volts to plus 540 volts; on December 16th, with high positive values, and on the 27th, with low positive values.

The highest positive values occurred on December 7th, 540 volts, during heavy snow; on the 9th, 93.7 volts, during clear and cloudless weather; on the 10th, 67 volts, during clear weather; on the 16th, 1,307 volts, during light snow, 957, during heavy snow; and on the 17th, 102 volts, during clear weather. The values nearest zero occurred on the 15th, minus 5 volts, during light rain.

The highest negative values were 57 volts on the 13th, during light rain; 688 volts on the 15th, during light rain, and 108.5 volts on the 18th, during light rain. Dense fog is recorded on the morning of the 24th, accompanied with positive electrification, in value 60 volts, the average value for the remainder of the day being 22.6 volts.

At Boston, Massachusetts, a complete set of observations has been obtained. Negative indications occur on the following dates: December 4th, under circumstances to be men-

tioned later; on December 6th, following snow, during cloudy weather, on the same date in the afternoon, preceding snow by twelve hours; on the 12th, during cloudy weather, preceding rain seven hours; on the 15th, preceding snow twelve hours; on the 18th, preceding rain two and a half hours; on the 20th, during fair weather; on the 23d, preceding rain nine hours; on the 24th, preceding rain four hours; on the 26th, preceding snow two hours; on the 29th, preceding snow twelve hours; on the 30th, during snow, changing to positive; on the 31st, during snow.

Snow occurred on the 5th, accompanied by high positive potentials, increasing during the day; on the 7th, early in the morning, accompanied throughout the day by high positive potentials; on the 15th, at 11.30 a. m., and all day on the 16th, accompanied by high increasing positive potentials; on the 26th, beginning at 11 a. m. and ending at 12.30 p. m., high negative values, changing with the snow to high positive; on the 27th, from 10 a. m. to 1.15 p. m., accompanied by increasing positive values; on the 30th, from early in the morning throughout that day and the following, high negative changing to high positive values, becoming negative for a few hours on the 31st. There are at least three instances in which the coming snow might have been predicted from the indications of the electrometer, viz., on December 6th, 15th, and 29th.

Rain on the 12th was preceded by negative values, and accompanied on the 13th by low positive values. Likewise on the 18th and 24th negative indications preceded the rain sufficiently long to be of practical benefit. The highest positive potentials occurred on the 16th, 405 volts, during heavy snow, and on the 29th, 343 volts, during fair weather. In no case yet has the highest positive value obtained during fair weather exceeded or equalled that obtained during snowfall.

On three dates polar bands were observed, and the behaviour of the electrometer during their prevalence is most interesting. On December 4th the values were at 9 a. m., positive 75; at 11 a. m., positive 142.5; at 1 p. m., minus 226.5; and at 3 p. m., positive 257 volts. There were no noticeable changes in the weather. Polar bands were noticed from 3.30 p. m. to 6 p. m. On the 11th and 14th there are also marked variations in the potential during the continuance of polar bands.

At Ithaca, New York, observations have been continued during the month with the following results: on November 30th, during light snow, negative electricity was followed by heavy snow and positive values; on December 2d very high but variable negative indications occurred in advance of snow, with a change to increasing positive values during the snow; on December 3d negative values, snowing at intervals; on December 4th very high positive values in the forenoon, during snow, decreasing after snow ended, and in the afternoon, during cloudy weather, negative values; on December 5th negative values, during snow; on December 6th negative during light snow, positive after the snow ended; on December 7th negative in advance of snow, decreasing during snow; on December 9th small negative values in the morning, during calm cloudy weather; on December 13th negative values in the morning during threatening weather; on December 14th negative in the morning during threatening weather; on December 16th negative throughout the day, with snow in the forenoon; on December 18th negative during rain; on the 19th negative during snow but decreasing in value; on the 23d negative during threatening weather; on the 25th, in the morning, snow with high positive values, followed by threatening weather and high negative values, followed still later by snow and high negative values; on the 27th positive values during snow, with negative values after the snow had ended; on the 28th negative values during calm fair weather.

Snow, accompanied by high positive values, is recorded on December 15th, 22d, and 26th. December 5th is the most noteworthy of the dates on which snow fell accompanied by negative values; and even this seems to show a decrease in the negative electrification during snow. The values for the

different observations were respectively, -150, -5, -525, and -324 volts, the snow beginning a little before, and ending a little after the last observations.

These observations at Ithaca seem to strongly confirm the statement first made by Wislicenus, and subsequently hinted at by many observers, that a negative value, during winter months and under certain conditions of weather, is almost always an indication of snowfall within a certain distance of the place of observation.

During the snowfall at the place of observation the values are, as a rule, positive, and increasing during the continuance of the snow, or, if negative, the values decrease with the continuance of snow, which is virtually the same condition.

The highest positive values occurred on the following dates, with, in every case, close connection with snow: On 2d, value 800 volts, during light snow; on 3d, value 1,200 volts, during light snow; on 4th, 2,200 volts, during light snow; on the 15th, 2,270 volts, during light snow, 2,500 volts, during heavy snow, 960 volts, during light snow; on the 25th, 615 volts, during light snow; on the 26th, 1,550 to 2,000 volts, during light snow; on 27th, 2,300 volts, following snow one hour.

The values nearest zero were as follows, marked, as a rule, by cloudy, threatening weather: On November 29th, 7 volts, during threatening weather; on December 5th, 35 volts, during threatening weather; on the 7th, 5 volts, and on the 16th, 0 to -10 volts, during threatening weather; and on the 19th, 0 volts, during threatening weather. It may be of interest to note that for the first date given rain followed in twelve hours; on the second date snow followed in three hours; on the third date snow followed in one hour and fifty minutes; and on the fourth date snow followed in thirty minutes. For the 19th no precipitation is recorded within forty hours, although the weather remained for some time threatening and cloudy.

The highest negative values occurred on December 14th, 350 volts, during threatening weather, preceding snow twelve hours; on December 16th, 400 volts, during light snow, which soon ended; on December 18th, 668 volts, during light rain; and on December 25th, during light snow.

On chart vi is plotted the observations made during the month of December, 1886, at Boston, Ithaca, and New Haven. The observations for the present are made at 9 a. m., 11 a. m., 1 p. m., and 3 p. m. In the case of Boston, considering the curve generally, we notice that there are four periods of marked fluctuation, namely, December 5-6th, December 15-16th, December 25th, and December 29th. All these are found to correspond with certain atmospheric disturbances, and it is very evident that these fluctuations are closely connected with the movements of storm-areas. In this special case, the dates mentioned above are dates of heavy snow at Boston. To some extent there is an agreement between the dates of marked fluctuation at Boston and Ithaca, and there seems to be, as might be anticipated, a certain time difference between the two places. Thus, at Ithaca, the highest positive values on the 4th and 15th appear to precede by some hours the highest positive values obtained at Boston. But the snow began at Ithaca on 4th at 7.45 a. m., while it did not begin at Boston until 8.15 a. m. of the 5th, and on the 15th snow began at Ithaca during the early morning while it did not begin at Boston until 11.30 p. m. of the 15th; or the time difference between certain electrometer indications at two places is connected with their distance from the disturbing influences.

OPTICAL PHENOMENA.

SOLAR HALOS.

Solar halos were observed in the various states and territories on the following dates:

Arizona.—4th, 6th, 16th, 28th.

California.—1st, 3d, 4th, 10th, 15th, 16th, 22d, 28th, 31st.

Colorado.—2d, 5th, 9th, 12th.

Dakota.—1st to 4th, 6th, 11th, 23d, 26th, 27th, 29th, 31st.

Florida.—4th, 8th, 25th, 28th.

Georgia.—29th, 31st.

Idaho.—21st.

Illinois.—3d, 7th, 11th, 15th, 16th, 20th, 22d, 23d, 25th, 27th, 28th, 30th.

Indiana.—2d.

Iowa.—3d, 27th, 29th.

Kansas.—1st, 13th, 21st, 22d, 23d, 27th, 28th, 29th, 31st.

Kentucky.—3d.

Maine.—22d, 24th, 30th.

Massachusetts.—4th, 10th, 27th.

Michigan.—7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, 17th, 18th, 20th, 22d, 25th, 27th, 28th, 30th.

Minnesota.—1st to 4th, 11th, 14th, 20th, 22d, 23d, 26th, 27th, 29th.

Missouri.—19th.

Montana.—3d, 5th, 25th, 29th.

Nebraska.—30th, 31st.

Nevada.—26th.

New Hampshire.—6th.

New Jersey.—3d, 4th, 26th, 28th, 29th.

New York.—5th, 10th, 16th, 17th, 23d, 28th, 29th, 30th.

North Carolina.—1st, 8th, 9th, 12th, 14th, 17th, 19th, 24th, 28th.

Ohio.—4th, 7th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, 26th, 28th, 30th.

Oregon.—18th, 20th.

Pennsylvania.—17th, 23d.

South Carolina.—8th, 9th, 28th, 29th.

Tennessee.—8th, 9th, 18th, 20th, 25th, 26th.

Texas.—7th, 27th.

Vermont.—10th, 23d, 30th.

Virginia.—9th, 19th.

Wisconsin.—1st, 11th, 18th, 24th, 27th to 30th.

Wyoming.—1st, 2d, 5th, 11th, 15th, 21st.

LUNAR HALOS.

Lunar halos were observed in the various states and territories on the following dates:

Alabama.—7th, 8th, 9th,

Arizona.—3d to 9th, 28th, 29th.

Arkansas.—7th, 8th, 10th.

California.—1st to 5th, 10th, 11th, 15th, 30th, 31st.

Colorado.—6th, 9th.

Connecticut.—4th, 10th.

Dakota.—2d, 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 15th.

District of Columbia.—11th.

Florida.—4th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 17th, 30th.

Georgia.—7th, 8th, 9th, 31st.

Idaho.—2d, 4th, 6th, 10th, 19th.

Illinois.—3d, 6th, 10th, 11th, 14th, 15th, 28th, 30th, 31st.

Indiana.—3d, 6th, 7th, 11th, 18th.

Indian Territory.—7th, 10th.

Iowa.—3d, 6th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 19th, 20th, 31st.

Kansas.—1st, 2d, 3d, 5th, 6th, 9th, 10th, 15th, 16th, 18th, 22d, 29th, 31st.

Kentucky.—3d, 4th, 8th.

Louisiana.—7th, 30th.

Maine.—4th, 6th, 7th, 11th, 29th.

Maryland.—11th.

Massachusetts.—4th, 6th, 10th, 11th, 18th.

Michigan.—4th, 5th, 7th to 10th, 17th, 29th, 30th.

Minnesota.—1st, 5th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 14th, 16th, 17th.

Mississippi.—7th.

Missouri.—6th.

Montana.—5th, 7th, 9th, 12th, 29th.

Nebraska.—6th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 13th, 31st.

Nevada.—1st, 6th, 10th.

New Hampshire.—4th, 6th, 10th, 14th, 19th.

New Jersey.—4th, 7th, 11th, 14th, 26th.

New Mexico.—6th.

New York.—4th, 5th, 10th, 11th, 28th.

North Carolina.—3d, 4th, 8th, 9th, 13th, 30th.

Ohio.—1st, 2d, 7th, 8th, 11th, 15th, 17th, 30th.

Oregon.—1st, 4th, 5th, 7th, 30th.